

What is claimed is:

1. A method of searching for information on a computer information network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a searchbase comprising a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources published on a computer information network and includes a query language and template usable therewith, a sending protocol usable therewith and a receiving protocol usable therewith;

receiving a search request over the computer information network from a user for retrieving information from the plurality of information sources in accordance with given search criteria;

transforming the search request into an inquiry capable of searching the searchbase;

searching the searchbase with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources which potentially meet the given search criteria;

transforming the search request into queries for the identified information sources, wherein each query is in accordance with the query language and query template in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source;

sending the queries over the computer information network to the identified information sources in accordance with the sending

protocol in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source; and

receiving information over the computer information network from the identified information sources in response to the queries in accordance with the receiving protocol in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is a query form.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is a static page.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is dynamically generated.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the sending protocol and the receiving protocol are different protocols.

6. A method of searching for information on a computer information network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a searchbase comprising a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources published on a computer information network and includes a query language and template usable therewith, a sending protocol usable therewith and a receiving protocol usable therewith;

receiving a search request over the computer information network from a user for retrieving information from the plurality of information sources in accordance with given search criteria;

transforming the search request into a plurality of queries for the plurality of information sources, wherein each query is in accordance with the query language and query template in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source;

sending the plurality of queries over the computer information network to the plurality of information sources in accordance with the sending protocol in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source;

receiving information over the computer information network from the plurality of information sources in response to the queries in accordance with the receiving protocol in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source; and

identifying to the user over the computer information network any information sources from which information was received which meets the given search criteria.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is a query form.

8. The method according to claim 6, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is a static page.

9. The method according to claim 6, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is dynamically generated.

10. The method according to claim 6, wherein the sending protocol and the receiving protocol are different protocols.

11. A method of searching for information on a computer information network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a searchbase comprising a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources published on a computer information network and includes an identification of the information source and a content description thereof, a query language and template usable therewith, a sending protocol usable therewith, a receiving protocol usable therewith, and a response language and parsing template usable therewith;

receiving a search request over the computer information network from a user for retrieving information from the plurality of information sources in accordance with given search criteria;

transforming the search request into an inquiry capable of searching the searchbase;

searching the searchbase with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources which potentially meet the given search criteria; and

providing the identity of the identified information sources to the user over the computer information network.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein in addition to providing the identity, at least a portion of the content description is provided.

13. The method according to claim 11, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is a query form.

14. The method according to claim 11, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is a static page.

15. The method according to claim 11, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is dynamically generated.

16. The method according to claim 11, wherein the sending protocol and the receiving protocol are different protocols.

17. The method according to claim 6, further comprising prior to the step of transforming:

transforming the search request into an inquiry capable of searching the searchbase;

searching the searchbase with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources which potentially meet the given search criteria; and

wherein the search request is then transformed into queries for the identified information sources.

18. The method according to claim 17, wherein the search request is transformed into queries only for the identified information sources.

19. The method according to claim 17, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is a query form.

20. The method according to claim 17, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is a static page.

21. The method according to claim 17, wherein at least one of the plurality of information sources is dynamically generated.

22. The method according to claim 17, wherein the sending protocol and the receiving protocol are different protocols.

23. The method according to claim 17, wherein in addition to sending the plurality of queries, a query is sent to at least one additional information source.

24. The method according to claim 23, wherein the descriptive packet for the at least one additional information source is obtained after receipt of the search request by receiving information in accordance with a receiving protocol usable with the at least one additional information source.

25. The method according to claim 17, wherein the step of identifying to the user comprises presenting at least a portion of the received information.

26. The method according to claim 17, wherein the step of identifying to the user comprises organizing at least a portion of the received information and presenting the organized information to the user.

27. The method according to claim 17, wherein each descriptive packet further includes a response language and parsing template usable with the associated information source and wherein the step of identifying to the user comprises organizing at least a portion of the received information in accordance with the search request and the response language and parsing template in the descriptive packet for the associated information source and presenting the organized information.

28. The method according to claim 27, wherein the query language and the response language are the same language.

29. The method according to claim 17, wherein the received information includes dynamically generated information.

30. The method according to claim 17, wherein the received information includes static information.

31. The method according to claim 17, wherein the received information includes at least one database.

32. The method according to claim 17, wherein the received information includes text.

33. The method according to claim 17, wherein the received information includes graphics.

34. The method according to claim 17, wherein the received information includes audio.

35. The method according to claim 17, wherein the received information includes video.

36. The method according to claim 17, wherein the computer information network is the Internet.

37. The method according to claim 17, wherein the step of providing a searchbase is performed after the step of receiving a search request.

38. A method of searching for information on a computer information network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a searchbase comprising a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources published on a computer information network and includes an identification of the information source and a content description thereof, a query language and template usable therewith, a sending protocol usable therewith, a receiving protocol usable therewith, and a response language and parsing template usable therewith;



receiving a search request over the computer information network from a user for retrieving information from the plurality of information sources in accordance with given search criteria;

transforming the search request into an inquiry capable of searching the searchbase;

searching the searchbase with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources which potentially meet the given search criteria;

transforming the search request into queries for the identified information sources, wherein each query is in accordance with the query language and query template in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source;

sending the queries over the computer information network to the identified information sources in accordance with the sending protocol in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source;

receiving information over the computer information network from the identified information sources in response to the queries in accordance with the receiving protocol in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source;

organizing at least a portion of the received information in accordance with the search request and the response language and

parsing template in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source; and

identifying any of the identified information sources from which information is received which meet the given search criteria and presenting the organized portion of the received information thereof to the user over the computer information network.

39. The method according to claim 38, wherein the query language and the response language are the same language.

40. The method according to claim 38, wherein the sending protocol and the receiving protocol are different protocols.

41. The method according to claim 38, wherein the received information includes dynamically generated information.

42. The method according to claim 38, wherein the received information includes static information.

43. The method according to claim 38, wherein the received information includes at least one database.

44. The method according to claim 38, wherein the received information includes text.

45. The method according to claim 38, wherein the received information includes graphics.

46. The method according to claim 38, wherein the received information includes audio.

47. The method according to claim 38, wherein the received information includes video.

48. The method according to claim 38, wherein the computer information network is the Internet.

49. A method for creating a searchbase for information sources published on a computer information network, the method comprising the steps of: obtaining information for each information source including an identification of the information source and a content description thereof, a query language and template usable therewith, a sending protocol usable therewith, and a receiving protocol usable therewith; producing a descriptive packet for each information source from the obtained information; and providing access to the searchbase over a computer information network.

50. The method according to claim 49, wherein the step of obtaining comprises obtaining a response language and parsing template usable therewith.

51. The method according to claim 50, wherein the step of obtaining comprises receiving information for at least one of the information sources.

52. The method according to claim 51, wherein the step of receiving comprises providing a blank form for the information source and receiving a completed form for the information source.

53. The method according to claim 52, wherein the step of providing a blank form comprises publishing the blank form on the Internet.

54. The method according to claim 52, wherein the step of providing a blank form comprises providing the blank form in response to a request therefor.

55. The method according to claim 51, further comprising describing the information required for the descriptive packet in a publication.

56. The method according to claim 55, wherein the publication is made on the Internet, by electronic publication, or in print media.

57. The method according to claim 51, wherein the step of receiving comprises receiving the information in accordance with a receiving protocol usable with the information source.

58. The method according to claim 50, wherein the step of obtaining comprises accessing at least one information source and extracting at least part of the information required for the descriptive packet.

59. The method according to claim 58, wherein the step of extracting comprises extracting information from at least one of meta-tags in the accessed information source and references obtainable from the accessed information source.

60. The method according to claim 50, wherein at least one information source is a query form.

61. The method according to claim 50, wherein at least one information source is a static page.

62. The method according to claim 50, wherein at least one information source is dynamically generated.

63. The method according to claim 50, wherein the query language and the response language are the same language.

64. The method according to claim 50, wherein the sending protocol and the receiving protocol are different protocols.

65. The method according to claim 50, wherein the computer information network is the Internet.

66. A method for searching over the Internet comprising the steps of:

providing an index of publications published at URL addresses on the Internet;

receiving a search request including search criteria;

searching the publications by searching the index using the search criteria;

retrieving a set of URL addresses from the index for publications which meet the search criteria;

searching the publications currently available at the retrieved URL addresses using the search criteria; and

providing in response to the search request URL addresses in the set which meet the search criteria.

67. The method according to claim 66, wherein the step of providing URL addresses comprises providing only URL addresses in the set which currently meet the search criteria.

68. The method according to claim 67, wherein the step of providing URL addresses comprises providing all URL addresses in the set which currently meet the search criteria.

69. The method according to claim 66, wherein the publications include at least one database.

70. The method according to claim 66, wherein the publications include text.

71. The method according to claim 66, wherein the publications include graphics.

72. The method according to claim 66, wherein the publications include audio.

73. The method according to claim 66, wherein the publications include video.

74. The method according to claim 66, wherein the step of providing an index comprises creating the index.

75. The method according to claim 1, 6, 11, 17 or 38, wherein the step of providing a searchbase comprises creating the searchbase.

76. The method according to claim 1, 6, 11, 17, 38 or 49, wherein the information source is associated with a vendor.

77. The method according to claim 1, 6, 11, 17, 38 or 49 wherein the information source is associated with a news organization.

78. The method according to claim 1, 6, 11, 17, 38 or 49 wherein the information source is associated with an organization providing access to a database.

79. The method according to claim 1, 6, 11, 17, 38 or 49 wherein the information source is associated with an organization providing access to booking information.